Plants by Bloom Season, Sequence, and Color

Spring and Summer

Butterfly milkweed (orange)
Wild bergamot (purple)
Southern beardtongue (pink)
Common milkweed (pink)
Catmint (blue)

Summer

Swamp milkweed (pink)
Joe-pye weed (pink)
Northern blazing star (pink)
Spotted bee balm (pink)
Broad-leaved mountain mint (white)
Anise hyssop (blue)
Culver's root (white)

Summer and Fall

Blackeyed Susan (yellow)
Ironweed (pink)
New England aster (purple)
Purple coneflower (purple)
Sneezeweed (yellow)

This monarch and pollinator garden was planted at the Forest Service office in Durham, NH. (Photo: Angie Hammond)

Bumblebees are native, unlike honeybees. (Photo: Angie Hammond)

Resource

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Pollinator-Friendly Plants for the Northeast United States. http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/ny/home/?cid=nrcs144p2_027390.

References

Monarch Joint Venture. 2015. http://monarchjointventure.org/. (3 March 2015).

Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. Pollinator Conservation Resource Center. www.xerces.org/pollinator-resource-center/. (3 March 2015).

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Creating Monarch and Pollinator Habitat in New Hampshire

(Photo: Angie Hammond)

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Why Create Habitat?

Loss of habitat is one reason populations of monarch butterflies and insect pollinators are declining. Native flowering plants provide food for monarch butterflies and native pollinators. The best way to support and protect monarch and pollinator populations is by preserving, enhancing, and restoring plant habitat they use as food sources and reproductive areas.

Monarch Butterflies

In fall monarchs fly almost 3,000 miles, from the United States and Canada south to forests in the mountains of Mexico (or to California in the West). They have never been to Mexico but mysteriously know the way. The butterflies spend the winter huddled together on trees and in spring begin migrating north. Along the northern journey, the butterflies lay eggs on milkweed plants, recolonizing the southern United States before they die. The eggs hatch into caterpillars, and when mature they pupate into adult butterflies. These adults fly north to the summer breeding grounds; this final generation of the year will participate in the fall migration south to Mexico.

Habitat for monarchs must support both breeding adults and caterpillars, from early summer through late fall. Monarchs need milkweed for more than a place to lay eggs; caterpillars eat the leaves, and butterflies drink the high quality nectar—as well as nectar of other flowers. Monarchs are not good pollinators and depend on other insects to pollinate their food plants.

(Photo: Michael Bohne)

Pollinators

Pollinators sustain many native plant communities and help provide food for people, and food and habitat for other insects and wildlife. Butterflies, moths, bees, wasps, flies, and beetles eat nectar and pollen, pollinating flowers as they feed. Native pollinators, especially bumblebees, pollinate 80 percent of all flowering plants and about 35 percent of agricultural crops. And, unlike honeybees, natives are capable of buzz pollination, which allows them to efficiently pollinate tomatoes, eggplants, potatoes, pumpkins, blueberries, and cranberries. Enhancing habitat for native bees also supports honeybees. Bees need food from early spring through late fall.

(Photo: Angie Hammond)

How Can You Help?

You can help declining populations of monarchs and pollinators by creating pesticide-free habitats of milkweed and nectar plants. Choose a variety of plants that flower from roughly April through October. Evaluate the site for the amount of sunlight, soil type, and soil moisture; choose pesticide-free plants that are suited to the site conditions and plant hardiness zone. Include plants with a variety of bloom time and flower shape, size, and color, to accommodate preferences and physical variations among pollinators. Do not apply pesticides. An example plant list follows.

(Photo: Angie Hammond)